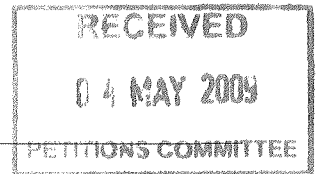
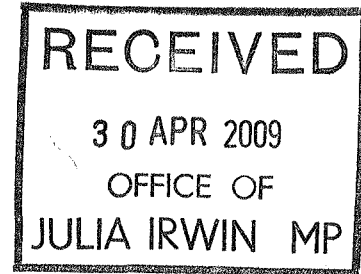




SENATOR THE HON STEPHEN CONROY
MINISTER FOR BROADBAND, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SENATE



Mrs Julia Irwin MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mrs Irwin *Julia*

Funding of SBS

Thank you for your letter dated 26 February 2009 and attached petition concerning funding for the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS).

SBS is one of Australia's most important public institutions. The Australian Government recognises the importance of maintaining SBS as an independent and comprehensive national public broadcaster, catering for diverse interests in the Australian community.

Under the *Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991*, the principal Charter function of SBS is to provide multilingual and multicultural radio and television services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society. It is an important means of exposing audiences to the widest possible range of cultures and perspectives, fostering understanding and acceptance of the diversity of the Australian people.

The Government is committed to ensuring adequate funding to SBS on a triennial basis to enable it to provide Australians with high-quality broadcasting services, free from political interference.

New funding proposals, including any request for additional radio services, will be considered during SBS's Triennial Funding Review, which will also consider the efficiency and performance of the national broadcaster. Triennial Funding Submissions from both the SBS and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) will be considered in the context of the forthcoming Budget.

In October 2008, the Government released a public discussion paper aimed at stimulating ideas and comments about the future roles of SBS and the ABC. It is intended that this process will also inform the Government's future policy and funding decisions in relation to the two broadcasters.

Thank you for bringing this important matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Conroy
Minister for Broadband,
Communications and the Digital Economy

22 APR 2009